

Helen Golightly
Chief Executive
North East Local Enterprise Partnership
1 St James' Gate
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4AD

1st July 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Proposed Northumberland Line Order

I am writing on behalf of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership to express support for the application by Northumberland County Council for the above-mentioned Order.

The introduction of passenger services to the Northumberland Line is a project highlighted in our Strategic Economic Plan to improve connectivity in the North East. The improved connectivity provided by the Northumberland Line will bring social and economic benefits to residents, commuters, visitors and businesses both in Northumberland and the wider region.

Improving rail links between Newcastle and Ashington will enable residents in Northumberland and the wider region to better access employment and training opportunities. The proposed investments will serve key regional development sites at the Port of Blyth and the Northumberland Energy Park, which have the potential to create thousands of new jobs in advanced manufacturing and renewable energy.

The need for improved public transport infrastructure has been re-emphasised as part of the region's response to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The North East Covid-19 Economic Response Group published the Recovery and Renewal Deal for the North East in October 2020. The Recovery and Renewal Deal sets out how, with support from the Government and regional collaboration, the North East could recover from the impacts of the pandemic and reach our goal of creating 100,000 good quality and secure jobs.

Sustainability and decarbonisation are at the core of our plans for economic recovery, as we aim to make progress towards a target of Net Zero emissions by investing in renewable energy and our transport and digital infrastructure. The proposed reopening of the Northumberland Line supports these ambitions by enhancing public transport connectivity between Ashington, Blyth and Newcastle. This will help to reduce congestion and improve air quality on key corridors by moving people away from car travel and onto public transport.

The Port of Blyth in Northumberland is a key international gateway for the movement of freight. Improving transport links to the port forms part of the regional response to changes arising from EU Exit, and is aligned with the ambitions and targets articulated in the North East Trade and Export Strategy to open up international trade and investment opportunities. The additional rail capacity for freight unlocked by investment in the

Northumberland Line will help support the delivery of significant growth in our key manufacturing sectors and in connected supply chains.

The proposed Northumberland Line Order is vital to secure the delivery of the scheme and we hope the Secretary of State will make the Order to enable the scheme to go ahead as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Golightly', is shown on a light-colored background.

Helen Golightly
Chief Executive
North East Local Enterprise Partnership